

The Power of Words

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I think perhaps my words this time
Will get delivered all in rhyme.
And if by chance you're doubting me,
Listen extra-carefully.

I'm doing this because, you see,
I really want my words to be
Impactful, heard, remembered, and
POWERFUL in what they send.

"The Power of Words"— that's this year's theme.
What does this theme really mean?
This Theme's meant to make us pause:
To realize Words DO often cause
Con-se-quen-ces-- Good AND Bad;
The course they take depends a tad
On words WE choose, and Others too,
And how we opt to say and do
The things we write or blog or speak
Or post to Facebook, Tweet, RE-tweet.

Words shape Thoughts and Actions and
Words engender Foe or Friend.

Words' effects can run amok.
Picked WITH CARE Words aid good luck;
Expressed instead *WITHOUT* much care,
Words, like stones, sting Here and There.

Where is "there" and where is "here"?
The answer is no longer clear.
24-7-365
While we're sleeping, words go live!

"Anywhere" 'cuz words have reach
Thanks to emails, Blogs and Tweets.
Thanks to digital networks ... and
Network ties 'cross global friends.

WHO is Speaker? WHO receives?
'Tis no longer clear with ease.
Why is this?: The Dig'tal "Face"
Often lacks a name or trace.

Scores on products, ser-vi-ces
Come from whom?: "He says/she says."
Evidence shows, at least sometimes
The critics aim to undermine
Their target. Why? Because, you see
They, in act-u-al-i-ty,
Are vying with the folks they "ding"
And "Victors" when their words do sting.

Competing for the best reviews,
Competing for praiseworthy news,
Competing for "Likes," "thumbs-up," and
In search of followers, new friends.

Harmful acts, the research shows,
Often target STARS who go
WAY off the charts, performance-high!
Toppling them helps Others fly!

Mouse-clicked ratings 'stead of paper
Surely do ease manual-labor.
Yet, response-rates suffer when
Raters have no pencil, pen.

With their mouse-clicks, 'stead of ink,
Ratings tend you guessed!....to sink.

Explanations oft include:
Raters who become "unglued"
Us'ly those with axe to grind--
NOT the ones with peace of mind.

Is this whining? Ask the firm:
Good repute decades earned,
Suffers damage from a tweet
Full of lies; with no retreat.

Can't because it knows *NOT* who
From which source it did ensue
Chatter that went viral when
Tweets occurred from Foe, not Friend.
"They" whose aim 'twas to unseat
Number 1-- thus making heat.

Ask the Prof whose ratings poor
Show 'cuz she/he gave low scores
To student-cheaters who wickedly
Organized it, dig-it-ly:
A plan of revenge via "rate-my-professor"
To make the INSTRUCTOR score much lesser.

Ask the Scholar who suffers taint
When Reviewers claim pubs ain't
"Val--u-ble" ... when p'raps they are.
It's easy-- with words-- to dim a Star.

It's easy, too, for words to RAISE
Hoard of people when there's praise
That comes from viral-messages
Especially ones like "Oprah says..."

New potential does accrue
In this Internet Era, too:
"Trojan Worms" and "Heart-bleed bugs,"
"Viruses" by Faceless Thugs,
Security-breaches like "Wiki-Leaks,"
And Insta-grams when Leaders speak,
YouTube-videos and photo-shots.
Gained permission? Often *not.*

One good thing 'bout Internet:
It speeds "talking," helps us vet
Thoughts we have, and feelings too.
Prob'ly, I have emailed YOU!

Em-ploy-ees al-so "'Net-talk."
While they work or later, "walk."
"VOICE" now takes on quite new forms:
Helped by tweets, voice raises storms
Of angry publics OR joyous supporters
Within and across many borders.

My point here is: Words affect
LIVES of people, firms, their "Net."
Therefore, Words STIR consequence,
'Specially when they're mouse-click-sent.

How should Words get managed now?
Theories, findings don't say how.
Persuasion Theory assumes a face,
And then assumes that we can trace
Who said what to whom and when
In situations known too, Friends.

Leadership theories assume face, too,
Of Leaders whose visions supposedly do
Inform, inspire, and motivate
People, Teams to do things great.

The Internet has changed how much
Talk comes from JUST higher-ups.
Social media-postings, tweets
Carry visions that compete
Sometimes with what leaders say.
Does this weaken Leaders' Way?
Does this weaken management
Of company-wide sentiment?
Of the news stakeholders see,
Locally AND globally?

We don't know these answers yet.
Fairly recent: Internet.

When I earned my Ph.D.
At Northwestern University
Email did not yet exist!
"Air Mail" did (cross-borders)-- yes!
If I sought the Library?
Had to walk there! Yes-sir-ee!
When I had to research, look,
I had need to TOUCH a BOOK!

How to manage Words today?
Our field's journals do not say
THIS Conference helps illuminate
Answers needed. So... await!

ACROSS Divisions, Symposia,
Submitted by a bunch-o-ya
Caucuses, P-D-Double U's
ALL show Words of varied hues
Leaders' speeches, Ann'ul reports,
Business models, employee retorts,
Policies, Rules, Government Reforms;
Unequivocally, all shape norms.
Challenged, though, by "microphones"
'Net-provided. Glob'lly owned.

THIS Conference highlights METHODS, too,
For stud'ying words of MANY..... WHO?
Those who email, post, tweet, blog,
And, yes, SPEAK their dialogue.

As a whole, the Program shows
Words' effects indeed do grow
From MANY-LAYERED sources, and
Therefore, we should understand
Contextually-rich nuances
Ought to guide "He says/She says."

May THIS Conference cause a stir
'Bout the way WE use our words:

- Do we help to AID "Connect"
When we quickly choose "Reject"
When a paper in Round 1
Isn't loved by everyone?
- Are we helping to create
MANY top-performing Greats?
- Are our Publishing Cri-ter-ia
Enhancing innovation-- huh?
- Are we inspiring thoughts past "Grey"
When promotions count ONLY "A's"?
- Are OUR Words collectively
Advancing Science OR Academy?
- Rigor OR Relevance?: why this war?
Why those two words: "Either/Or"?
BOTH are needed. BOTH need "tweak."
BOTH should, therefore, be our "Speak."
- Do our Words embrace those who
Write, speak, blog discoveries NEW?
OR celebrate— alone -- "A" hits?
And thereby risk the loss of bits
Of insights needed to IMPROVE
The things we think and teach and do?
- What are the Words we hear US speak
When a vita we critique?

May this Conference help us see
The Power of Words non-trivially.
The Power of Words in ALL we do,
As Scholars, Teachers, Leaders too.

Let us open up OUR minds
To *methods* new--of varied kinds--
Including *sources* for New Thought.
So we're *NOT* just cycle-caught.

Let's think "CAN" and SPEAK "CAN" too!
Listen....and THEN state our views.
Let's con'frence like we've ne'er before
Alert to both words: "either.....or";
Change them.....to the strong word "AND"--

Inspiring *ALL!* Indeed, WE CAN!!!